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SIPDIS

HHS FOR A/S WADE HORN FROM AMBASSADOR CHARLIE RIES
EUR/SE FOR PARENTE/YOUNTCHI
G/TIP FOR DONNELLY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [PHUM](#) [TBIO](#) [EI](#) [GR](#) [HRIGHTS](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF HHS ACF A/S DR. WADE HORN
(ATHENS, OCTOBER 8-12)

REF: A. ATHENS 2406

[1](#)B. STATE 163054

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PLEASE TREAT ACCORDINGLY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Embassy Athens warmly welcomes the October 8-12 visit of Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, HHS to Greece. Your visit will provide an excellent opportunity not only to showcase U.S.-Greece relations, but to reiterate our strong commitment to advancing our human rights agenda in Greece, notably regarding trafficking in persons (TIP) and refugee recognition and resettlement. We have arranged meetings with high-level policy makers from the Ministries of Education, Employment, Health, Public Order, the Mayor of Athens, and the main opposition party, PASOK. We also have scheduled a roundtable discussion with anti-TIP NGOs, a panel discussion on "Refugee Status in Receiving Countries", a press event, and I will host a dinner with key members of the Greek Government's Interministerial Council on TIP.

[1](#)2. (U) Looking back, the last three years have been momentous for Greece. In 2002, Greece arrested the key leaders of the domestic terrorist group "17 November" which had terrorized Greece for 25 years, and had made Athens a "critical threat" post for the USG. In 2003, Greece held the EU Presidency at the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and kept the U.S.-EU relationship intact despite deep splits within Europe on relations with the U.S. In 2004, Greece hosted the Summer Olympics, a major terrorist target, without incident. In 2005, Greece joined the UNSC as a non-permanent member for the first time since 1952, and with the October 3 decision by the EU to begin accession talks with Turkey, a key Greek strategic objective was met and a new course was set for Greece-Turkey relations.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Among other topics, your visit will be a useful way to share best practices on trafficking in persons programs and to discuss common challenges from an operational standpoint. In Greece, the congressionally-mandated TIP report has been the key tool in getting government attention. Greece is currently on the Tier 2 Watchlist for the second consecutive year, a designation for problem countries. While Greece had made progress in recent years, it can do more in some major areas, including treating trafficked women as victims (not criminals), more vigorously prosecuting traffickers and keeping statistics on TIP-related convictions. Your visit comes during the middle of the TIP reporting season. We delivered in August an Action Plan of items for Greece to implement to better fight TIP, and will draft an interim assessment on their progress in November. The four items we are urging Greece to address this year are:

a) to develop an effective screening and referral mechanism for law enforcement and NGOs to use in identifying victims and directing victims to appropriate care;

b) to show an increase in the number of women referred to shelter and after care. To this end, the government should provide NGOs with more consistent access to detention centers to screen and assist possible victims;

c) to sign, make public, and implement a draft protocol with the Albanian government on child repatriation. (Note: This text has been returned to Albania and, at long last, is in final stages of completion. End Note.);

d) to actively implement the 2002 anti-trafficking law and show an increase in convictions and sentences obtained under the law. Also to gather and publish data on investigations, prosecution, convictions, and sentences for traffickers.

REFUGEE RECOGNITION AND RESETTLEMENT

[1](#)4. (U) Refugee issues are another key interest area for the Embassy, and your Greek interlocutors will benefit from your experience. Dozens if not hundreds of immigrants and refugees are smuggled every day on boats to Greek islands,

often intercepted by Coast Guard vessels, or across the Evros River from Turkey into northeastern Greece. There is criticism of the inadequate system for screening migrants when they are picked up en masse, leading some legitimate asylum-seekers to be detained as migrants. Greece has not begun to resettle refugees in significant numbers, and in fact has one of the lowest asylum recognition rates in Europe, just 0.9% in 2004. While there has been some improvement so far this year, there remains great room for progress. Greece was most recently criticized for its low asylum recognition rate and poor treatment and integration of refugees by Amnesty International in a October 2005 report, and also by the UN Committee Against Torture, UNHCR, local NGOs such as Greek Council for Refugees, Greece's Ombudsman, and others. Your visit will be an opportunity to share U.S. methods for refugee resettlement and integration and discuss the benefits to U.S. society of a policy of inclusion.

15. (U) The following represents some of the most significant issues in U.S.-Greece relations that may come up during your visit here.

GREECE AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

16. (SBU) In Prime Minister Karamanlis's May 20 meeting with the President in Washington, the two leaders affirmed their strategic partnership, and discussed a variety of issues, including democratization in the broader Middle East region, Iraq and Afghanistan. Greece has provided funding to the NATO training mission in Iraq, leading a multinational medical unit in Afghanistan, and has offered to host a ministerial meeting on democratization in the Middle East.

GREECE-TURKEY

17. (SBU) Although there are unresolved issues between Greece and Turkey, Greek-Turkish rapprochement remains the bedrock in their relations. As a result, Greece has been one of Turkey's strongest supporters in the EU because it relates Turkey's EU accession to its own strategic interests. As is the case in many EU member states, public opinion in Greece has not yet embraced Turkey in the EU. The government expects that a Turkish-EU dialogue on accession will contribute positively to stability in the region, while Greek public opinion shows that many Greeks, like their EU counterparts, have concerns about adding a large Muslim country to the EU family.

BALKANS

18. (SBU) Southeast Europe is a tough neighborhood, with the countries of the ex-Yugoslavia struggling to move beyond the wars that wracked the Balkans in the 90s. As the only country in the region that is a member of both NATO and the EU, Greece sees itself as a natural leader to assist the region's Euro-Atlantic integration. We strongly support this endeavor and would like to see Greece play an even more active role, including re-energizing its 550 million-euro Balkan assistance program.

19. (SBU) One issue that often comes up in bilateral meetings is the Macedonia name issue. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia, Greece and Macedonia in 1995 agreed on "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" as an interim name until the two countries could decide on a mutually acceptable solution. Last year's USG decision to recognize the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name touched off a storm of controversy in Greece. Many Greeks saw our decision as a deliberate snub and the explanation that we took this action to help defeat a referendum in Macedonia that could have split the country and de-stabilized the Balkans did not convince many here. In the aftermath, FM Molyviatis has asked the USG to publicly support the UN negotiations and accept whatever solution Athens and Skopje agree upon. We have done so and continue to strongly support the UN-led negotiations. On the surface, the issue seems to be wholly semantical, but to both sides it strikes deep chords of nationalism and historical destiny. Macedonia strives to join NATO and the EU, and to do so, must come to terms on the name of the country that will enter. Greece needs an acceptable compromise from the Macedonians; otherwise, the decision on Macedonia's NATO/EU entry would be unlikely to clear Parliament and may end up in a referendum.

DOMESTIC TERRORISM

10. (SBU) While we cooperated closely with Greece and congratulated their safe and successful Olympic games, we continue to be concerned about domestic terrorism in Greece. Greece made big strides by convicting key members of the infamous 17 November terrorist group, responsible for killing many Greeks and five Embassy employees over the course of its bloody, 25-year history. The same is true regarding prosecution of members of another domestic terrorist group, Peoples' Revolutionary Struggle (ELA), which, in past years, had bombed nightclubs frequented by U.S. servicemen.

11. (SBU) We are concerned that the December 2004 brutal assassination of a Greek police officer guarding the residence of the British army attache may represent the emergence of a follow-on terrorist group. We have also been concerned by the release of two convicted members of 17N and ELA (on medical grounds), believing this sends the wrong signal about Greece's commitment to the war on terrorism. Finally, more needs to be done to crack down on anarchists who use homemade bombs to attack targets like Citibank ATMs and political party offices. We have an excellent dialogue with the GoG on these matters.

PUBLIC OPINION

12. (SBU) A word on Greek public opinion and the media. You may have heard about strong anti-American feeling in Greece. It does exist in a general sense, directed at official American policies, but almost never translates into harsh treatment of Americans on a personal level. It reflects grievances over our perceived historical favoritism toward Turkey, American support for the former Greek military junta, the situation in Cyprus, our actions in Iraq, and, most recently, our policy to recognize Macedonia by its constitutional name, which, as noted earlier, many Greeks saw as a challenge to their national identity. Polls bear this out: some 93 percent of Greeks opposed the war in Iraq and a large majority (80 percent) believe the U.S. plays a negative role in the global war on terrorism. Some media outlets hype this sort of feeling, broadcasting violent images from Iraq and playing up any perceived slight against Greek interests by the United States.

13. (SBU) At the same time, there are signs of change. Per capita, Greeks make up the largest percentage of foreign students in the U.S. of any EU country. Many Greek elites have a nuanced and balanced view gained from years in the U.S. or from working closely with Americans in business or multilateral institutions. Your visit is part of the normal high-level exchange between our two countries.

14. (U) Again, I look forward to your visit and wish you a productive and pleasant stay in Athens.
RIES